

FEB 22 2000

MR. HATTIS: Thank you. My name is Ronald Hattis, I am a public health physician as well as a family physician, and one of my past jobs I was the Director of Health for Riverside County, the county immediately south of us here.

One of the things that I did while I was Director of Health was to set up an environmental health program to deal with hazardous waste, and I was involved in at least one nuclear spill -- not nuclear, I am sorry -- hazardous material spill myself to see what the methodology was for the cleanup.

Since that time, in the mid-1980's, I have been watching through the newspapers and following along, and I see that on a regular basis quite predictably we have overturned trucks in rural areas -- not just urban areas -- we have collisions; we have drunk drivers colliding with trucks containing barrels of hazardous materials. And there are intermittently, although not at a high rate but on a regular basis, spills tumbling out of canisters, liquids oozing out of barrels and so forth.

And in all of these cases roads are closed, public panic ensues, there is a difficult and expensive clean-up procedure. And in all of that time there has never been an adequate plan for truck safety in hauling hazardous materials. Now, the problem multiplies itself when it's nuclear materials.

1... I too am a member of Physicians for Social Responsibility, and in fact, one of the active physicians in this regard. I have prepared a letter with the text that Ms. Montana presented, which I will turn in, but what I want to emphasize at this point is a particular specific proposal. That proposal is that an escort vehicle -- or one on each side -- but at least in front of the truck, is needed in rural areas as well as in urban areas. It's in rural areas in particular that you are likely to encounter speeding vehicles; it's in rural areas in particular that you are likely to encounter poor road conditions -- potholes, slides, skid areas, the ability of a truck to fall into a river and pollute water supplies. And also you are more likely to be far from rescue teams, far from clean-up teams.

And also, the speeds are likely to be greater so that anything that happens is likely to cause more damage.

Now, the problem of a truck driver even with an escort in the cab, without an escort vehicle, if that truck is overturned, if there is an incapacitation of the driver, if the vehicle is causing a hazardous situation or the contents spill, there's maybe nobody who is competent and not incapacitated to call for help.

There's certainly nobody, while the driver is injured, to go and rope off the area. There is nobody to start the process of any kind of clean-up or even first aid for an injured driver and accompanying escort in the cab.

2 In general, truck safety has been left up to private industry, and private industry with existing standards and with existing requirements for the physical capabilities of the trucks has not prevented these persistently occurring accidents. The canisters may be more secure in the case of the nuclear waste than they are with 55-gallon drums of liquid toxic material that we encounter more frequently. But if they roll off into a river or a lake, they will be hard to retrieve, and if they involve themselves in a flaming crash due to a collision, there's no telling exactly how intact they will be.

There is a possibility of a serious nuclear release; there is also an even more likely chance of public panic, and there would be roads closed and so forth.

...1 So I do feel that the -- that the differentiation between urban truck driving with escorts and rural driving without escorts is an artificial one; that, in fact, it may be more hazardous in rural areas. So I want to make that very specific recommendation to supplement the remarks that Ms. Montana has already made.

FACILITATOR LAWSON: 30 seconds, please.

- 3 MR. HATTIS: [ From a public health standpoint, the entire project is a calculated risk, which I personally hope will be a success; but we have to do more planning on the transport end to safeguard the population.

Yucca Mountain may be secure, but if the transport of many tons of materials to and from causes accidents, it will cause a public uproar, and the project will ultimately fail if only due to popular opinion, let alone health hazards. ] Thank you.

FACILITATOR LAWSON: Thank you, sir.

MR. SKIPPER: Thank you.

FACILITATOR LAWSON: Our next speaker is Andrew Remus, to be followed by Ervin Lent and Bob Halstead.